



Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare
Partners: Amtrak, Caltrans Division of Rail, BNSF Railway Company, Union Pacific Railroad

REPRESENTING COUNTIES ALONG THE SAN JOAQUIN RAIL CORRIDOR

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, November 4, 2010

1:55 p.m. – 3:05 p.m.

New Madera Amtrak Station

18770 Road 26

Madera, CA 93638

Item 1- Call to order and Announcement (1:55 p.m.)

Amtrak arranged to have a special flag stop at the new Madera Platform in Madera, CA for the San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee attendees who were traveling from both north and south bound directions.

Committee Member, Vern Moss comments on the new station. He recognizes Lee Goldenberg and Chris Cypret of Caltrans with a statement entitled “My Job.” Committee Member Moss reads the statement aloud to the Committee and meeting attendees.

Committee Member Moss welcomes everyone in attendance. He thanks Amtrak’s Chairman, Joe Boardman for his work, and those who worked between state and county agencies and rail companies, making the new Madera, CA platform happen.

Committee Chair John Pedrozo leads the Committee introductions. The attending Committee Members introduce themselves and state the county or agency they are representing.

Item 2 – Public Comment on Non-Agenda Items Only (2:00 p.m. – 2:20 p.m.)

- A. Supervisor Brad Aborn makes a motion to approve the minutes from the July 29, 2010 San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee meeting. The motion is verbally seconded by Committee Member Moss. The minutes are then approved and the motion is carried.
- B. Committee Member Angelo Lamas presents a draft resolution to support High Speed Rail. Mr. Lamas says Congressman Cardoza’s office contacted the Committee chair regarding the Committee resolving to support High Speed Rail (HSR). Both Angelo Lamas and Committee Chair Pedrozo feel the Committee should support the concept of HSR. Mr. Lamas distributes a draft resolution handout on HSR and asks the Committee to review. The handout discusses how the HSR system works, the voter support for it, the funding received and the number of San Joaquin Valley HSR stops proposed. He states that HSR would affect passenger rail in the region and that it would be beneficial to work with the High Speed Rail Authority on complementary service.

Committee Member Ed Coviello asks to know how long it would take to approve the resolution and asks for time to review it. Angelo Lamas responds by saying that HSR has been discussed in the past, but never approved to motion. He suggests that if the language of the resolution looks okay, then the Committee Chair could be authorized to send the resolution out. Committee Member Coviello asks if it could be approved at the January 2011 meeting or before. Committee Member Angelo Lamas suggests a special meeting to approve it. Supervisor Aborn states that he is okay with the resolution. Supervisor Don Maben says the resolution is worded perfectly enough not to favor any one county and voices his support for the resolution. Supervisor Max Rodriguez is in agreement with the draft resolution and supports it.

Bill Bronte, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) Division of Rail, suggests that the last paragraph of the draft resolution be revised to make it clearer that HSR is an integrated statewide transportation system. He states that any support the Committee could lend HSR will become more and more important with the recent changes in congress.

Supervisor Vern Moss recognizes the need for HSR in California. He states his support of it.

Committee Member Howard Ableson voices his support of the resolution. Supervisor Vern Moss moves to approve the draft resolution.

Committee Member Angelo Lamas makes a motion to approve it and it is seconded by various members of the Committee.

All are in favor and the motion carries.

Committee Member Michael Snyder comments that he has been in contact with local assembly members in his county to urge a bill to make another exception to the bus and train connection requirements, specifically route three from Oroville to Sacramento, as there is no other public transportation option.

Item 5 – Reports (2:20 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.)

A. Amtrak California / Train Operations

Mike Edwards / Greg Santos

Mike Edwards, Amtrak, begins with an On Time Performance (OTP) review. He recalls the OTP for July 2010 as 100% on three trains. Track work, maintenance caused some delays on a few other trains. He reports August 2010's lowest OTP was 77.4%, and explains that most other trains scored around 90% in the OTP category for that month. September four trains scored 100%. Most other trains scored in the high 80's and up. He continues: In July 372 trains ran, with 19 late, accounting for a score of 94.9%, in August 372 trains ran, with 33 late accounting for a score of 91.1%, and in September 360 trains ran with 27 late, for a score of 92.5%.

Greg Santos, also from Amtrak, remarks on five trespasser incidents for the quarter, the biggest one being in Shafter, CA. Three other vehicle incidents occurred in Stanislaus County and there was a trespasser strike in another area.

Attendee Mike Barnbaum, asks if train 14 was held in Sacramento because of an incident.

Mr. Santos responds that the train was held in Sacramento.

B. *San Joaquin* Amtrak Passenger Services

Anthony Chapa

Anthony Chapa, Amtrak, reviews the quarter's Customer Service Index (CSI) scores. He notes the CSI scores for July at 91%. He states that September's report will be released shortly. He mentions the two highest rating scores were in the categories for communications from conductors and station personnel. He also notes that CSI scores for food and beverage were up by 7%. Mr. Chapa suggests that the addition of a mid-route cleaner in place for the last two months (covering seven trains, 40 hours a week) resulted in a 16% increase in CSI for this category. He closes by saying ridership in September for the *San Joaquins* was 71,915 passengers, which reflects a two percent increase over last year.

C. Amtrak Government Affairs / Federal Updates

Jonathan Hutchison

Jonathan Hutchison, Amtrak, opens by commending the construction of the new Madera Amtrak Station and the entities that worked together to implement it. He expresses concerns with political shifts due to the recent election, which might affect Federal funding to Amtrak. He adds that scrutiny may be directed at Amtrak on fiscal matters. He also suggests that articulation of the benefits and importance of a nationwide, intercity passenger rail system will be important. Mr. Hutchison then states that Fiscal Year 2010 showed Amtrak's highest ridership, which he attributed to On Time Performance improvements and notes that this increase was in spite the recession. He closes by saying that with the recent leadership changes in government and expected change in rail transportation funding, there may be a challenging future ahead but that the purity of the mission [of promoting rail transportation] remains there.

Mr. Barnbaum makes a comment on the addition of new rolling stock, noting that Siemens Corporation in Sacramento was awarded a contract to produce Northeast Corridor Amtrak Trains for 2013 release. He said that 250 jobs will be added to the Sacramento region to support this effort.

D. BNSF Railway Company

Rich Wessler

Rich Wessler, BNSF opens by saying Rick Deppler sends his regards for missing the meeting. He states he is proud of BNSF's relationship between Caltrans, Amtrak and several cities. He recalls the possible continuation of the older Madera platform and praises the new station. Mr. Wessler commends the ones responsible for building it. He then reviews several scores, saying that July's OTP was 92.2. August it was 90.3%, in September it was 93.1% and in October it was 89.5. He explains that BNSF performance numbers are calculated after subtracting delays for events that are beyond their control, such as Amtrak equipment failures, passenger issues, crossing accidents or trespasser issues involving their trains. Delays in last quarter were largely due to mechanical issues, very serious crossing accidents and a trespasser incident. He then recognizes the BNSF Engineering Department for the new Madera bridge work. He closes by giving a passenger operations update, noting that the Thanksgiving travel season will be a critical passenger period.

Committee Chair Pedrozo asks if there is a representative from Union Pacific Railway Company present. There is no answer.

E. Amtrak Thruway Bus Fall Schedule Change

Rick Peterson

Rick Peterson of Amtrak also praises the new platform. He announces that Amtrak is working with Caltrans to identify low performing thruway bus routes that connect to the *San Joaquin* route. Select cities will be eliminated from the routes. He stated that impact was expected to be low. He also noted that service to the Burbank Airport would expand. He went on to say that Amtrak was looking into adding three stops in the Coachella Valley before Christmas and says that there are no schedule changes of any note in trains. He further noted that for Thanksgiving, extra bus sections would be operated on routes to ensure fuller trains. Amtrak is also working on training bus drivers on Amtrak procedures and processes. Training has been done for every bus contractor in California and reached about 80% of bus drivers driving for Amtrak California.

Mr. Barnbaum notes that the Zephyr (number six) will be running earlier with a schedule change effective Monday. He asks what the reasoning behind this scheduling change was. He notes that the change is a connectivity problem. Mr. Peterson responds that the schedule change was made for more reliable connections with eastern trains.

F. California Department of Transportation/State Updates William D. Bronte

Bill Bronte ,Caltrans Division of Rail, announces that last week, California received Federal Funding of \$171 million, of which \$100 million will be used for new equipment, plus \$125 million leveraged in bond funds. He said that Caltrans is working with the Federal Railroad Administration to move an order for new stock that will include 40 new cars and six locomotives. Two other components of this awarding of Federal funds include: \$1.5 million to be put towards the State Rail Plan, noting that this would be the first State Rail Plan to be compliant with Federal regulations, plus an additional \$300,000 to be put towards a service development program for the Central Valley. Caltrans will be working with California High Speed Rail on this.

Mr. Bronte comments on the recent passing of Proposition 22, stating that there is an advantage to the intercity rail program, which will turn around the gas tax swap and intercity rail will no longer be competing for general fund dollars. He goes on to say the Public Transportation Account that was designed to fund transit at the local and state level is going to be restored. He hopes that coming up, depending upon court challenges and the like, Caltrans and all the transit agencies, will have more of an opportunity to go after the capital dollars that are needed to make services run right. He closed by iterating that support from the Committee on HSR is essential.

Committee Member Bruce Heard asks how safe the purchase of new equipment (referring to the 40 new cars and six locomotives) would be.

Mr. Bronte responds that it is 100% certain and that it would be designed to meet the growth of existing corridors. He notes the growth of the *San Joaquin* Corridor, stating that there were nearly 1 million passengers this year.

Committee Member Hank Fung asks what the budget development is and how will it work out.

Mr. Bronte explains that there is a way to amend the budget to incorporate the \$100 million in funding and going forward, appropriations for the bonds. He clarifies Governor-elect Jerry Brown will take the budget that the current Governor has proposed and it will be amended during the upcoming budget process, further noting that the budget will be amended anyway, due to the passing of other recent propositions.

Committee Member Michael Snyder asks if riders on the *San Joaquins* are turned away when trains are full.

Mr. Bronte responds, that to his knowledge, no.

Mr. Chapa states that the week of Thanksgiving is heaviest in ridership but that they do not refuse paying riders and that they find room for them. He iterates that there remains a need for expanding equipment.

Mr. Bronte brings attention to the seven Superliner cars that were restored and added to service on the *San Joaquin* Corridor.

Mr. Barnbaum supports Mr. Chapa's comment regarding the accommodation of passengers and states from his experience, that accepting and accommodating passengers is generally the conductor's practice.

Item 6 – Member Comments (2:40 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.)

Madera Committee Member Vern Moss thanks the Committee Chair and members of the Committee for their support through trials and tribulations of the last ten years. He then thanks Caltrans and Committee Member Richard Poythress for his support.

Mariposa Committee Member Supervisor Brad Aborn announces that this will be his last meeting. He recalls four years ago, when Mariposa County was allowed to join the Committee, despite the lack of passenger rail in the county. On behalf of himself and the late Ken Gossing, he thanks the Committee. He hopes to stay active with the Committee.

Committee Chair John Pedrozo thanks his neighboring counties, and then reflects on the early planning of the new Madera Amtrak Station and commends Madera Committee Member Moss's persistence on bringing this project to completion.

Committee Member Brad Aborn comments on the importance of Mariposa County being included in the San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee, noting that 10,000 connections were made this year between Amtrak and the Yosemite Area Regional Transit System.

Item 7 – Adjournment (2:51 p.m.)

Committee Chair John Pedrozo thanks the Committee and adjourns meeting at 2:51 p.m.